Claims

1. A method for providing synchronized service in a communications network including user terminals and servers providing services to the user terminals through at least one channel,

c h a r a c t e r i z e d by the steps of

- forming at least one group of user terminals and allocating at least one channel to an individual group,

- transmitting a recording to the terminals of a group thus formed, each recording including timing markers, each of which indicates an internal position within the recording,

- storing at least part of the recording prior to its playback at each terminal,

- sending a start command to each terminal of the group,

- in response to the start command, starting the playback of the recording at each terminal,

- maintaining status information for the recording, the status information indicating at least the playback position of the recording,

- transmitting a status message to the terminals, the message indicating new status information concerning the recording, and

- changing the playback status at each terminal according to said new status information.

2. A method according to claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by the further step of storing the recordings in a server.

3. A method according to claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the step of forming includes forming several user groups.

4. A method according to claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the step of storing includes the storing of the whole recording prior to its playback.

5. A method according to claim 1, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the status information further indicates at least the direction and the speed of the playback.

6. A method according to claim 2, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by initiating the start command at the server.

7. A method according to claim 2, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by initiating the start command at a user terminal.

8. A method according to claim 2, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by sending the status message from the server.

9. A method according to claim 8, c h a r a c t e r i z e d by sending

the status message in response to a status command from a user terminal.

10. A method according to claim 1, characterized by the further steps of

- assigning different priorities to the terminals of a group,
- sending new status information from more than one terminal, and
- generating the status message on the basis of the status information sent from the terminal with the highest priority of said more than one terminals.

11. A method according to claim 1, characterized by the further steps of

- assigning each terminal predetermined control operations by means of which the terminal is entitled to control the playback,
- sending new status information from a terminal,
- checking the control operations assigned to said terminal, and
- generating the status message in response to said checking.

12. A system for providing synchronized playback of recordings in a communications network with transmission channels, the system comprising

- a server for managing recordings stored within the system,
- user terminals for storing and playing the recordings, and
- transmission means for transmitting the recordings to the terminals through at least one channel,

characterized in that each recording includes timing markers (TM), each of which indicates an internal position within the recording, and that the system further includes

- first management means for maintaining information on user groups formed in the system, the information indicating the user terminal(s) belonging to each group, the channel(s) assigned to each group, and the recording(s) being used by the group,
- second management means for maintaining status information for said recordings, the status information indicating at least the playback position of the recording,
- first control means for sending status information to the user terminals of a group, and
- second control means at each user terminal, responsive to the first control means, for controlling the playback in the terminal according to said status information.

13. A system according to claim 12, characterized in that the system further includes a centralized database for storing the recordings.

14. A system according to claim 12, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the status information further indicates the direction and the speed of the playback.

15. A system according to claim 12, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the first management means reside in the server.

16. A system according to claim 12, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the first control means reside in the server.

17. A system according to claim 12, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that the second management means reside at least in the server.

18. A system according to claim 12, c h a r a c t e r i z e d in that user terminals are terminals of a mobile network.